

REMARKS

The claims previously in the case have been replaced by a set of new claims that are believed to be proper as to form and clearly patentable over the cited references. As to form, the "comes close to" language is proper, because it exactly expresses the relationships of the present invention.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as anticipated by MUELLER, or as unpatentable over FR 2,729,302 in view of METHVEN, or further in view of REYNOLDS, or still further in view of BRINSON, or even further in view of VINEY or FR 2,747,280.

The basic structure of the MUELLER table is basically different from Applicant's table structure: In the present invention the structure comprises a support to which two table tops are hingedly connected by means of levers. This support is not foldable.

In MUELLER, the locking means are a double pin 55, 56 and holes 60 and 62 which said pins 55, 56 may enter when they are mutually registered. As the pins 55, 56 are biased in a locking state by a spring 69, at the end of the unfolding phase, the edges 76, 77 of the hinge members 23, 24 having the holes 60, 62 abut the pins 55, 56 and stop the unfolding movement until the pins are moved.

But this abutment does not render the movement irreversible. In other words, as the unfolding movement is

blocked, a further reverse folding movement is still possible. And it is precisely this movement that the invention will prevent: To prevent the unfolding movement when the folding state is almost but not quite reached in order to prevent an unfolding movement when the user believes that the table is folded and locked in this folded state.

Of course, the spontaneous unfolding movement may result in injuries for someone having a part of his body located between the two panels, near the net.

The table according to the invention has at least one locked state, the folded one for example, in known manner and an abutment which can be passed over when folding the table, but which prevents the reverse movement if the folding movement is not fully achieved.

This function and the means for achieving it are not at all revealed in MUELLER.

French patent 2,729,302 to CORNILLEAU discloses locking means for blocking a folding table in either the folded state or in the unfolded state. CORNILLEAU does not include or suggest additional abutment means for preventing reversible movement especially from an "almost" folding state to an unfolded state. A table according to CORNILLEAU may spontaneously open itself if the locking means are not engaged due to --by way of example-- some deformation of the structure after a long outdoor use.

METHVEN discloses merely a guide for a latch of a door, in order to progressively force the latch to be retracted inside the door and to correct the tendency of the door to sag at its hinge side. This teaching is transposable to the CORNILLEAU structure in order to obtain a best guidance of the finger-latch to the latch opening (the panel playing the role of a door) but the METHVEN teaching cannot suggest the additional abutment means of the invention. Moreover, the METHVEN structure is of a type to improve the number of occurrences to get to a complete locking of the folded state of the tennis table and thus is a structure which does not need additional safety means according to the invention.

The other secondary references may teach the individual features for which they are applied; but as none of these improves the rejection over the more basic references discussed above, it is not believed to be necessary to discuss these further secondary references in detail at this time.

As the new claims are believed to bring out these features of novelty with ample particularity, it is believed that they are all patentable, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Robert J. Patch, Reg. No. 17,355
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

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